

Weekly Update | June 14, 2024

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope you are having a restful and productive summer. Whether you are teaching, conducting research, or preparing exhibits or performances, your contributions are greatly appreciated and valued in our quest for even greater academic quality. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to SMU's academic mission.

As mentioned in the [final Weekly](#) of the spring 2024 semester, I plan to send these updates twice each month during June and July and once in August prior to the start of the fall semester. If you have suggestions for what we should include in future communications, please submit your ideas through our story form via the button below. Suggestions received before noon on Tuesday will be reviewed and considered for publication in that week's Friday newsletter. Others will be held until the following week.

[Submit your story](#)

Previous newsletters are [available here](#).

Today's update falls into five categories: 1) Summer 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 4) Inclusive Excellence, and 5) News and Noteworthy.

Summer 2024

Ten new members elected to Board of Trustees

Ten individuals have been elected as new members of the SMU Board of Trustees, the principal governing body of the University, and will begin their service in fall 2024. All trustees (except *ex officio* trustees) serve for four years and may be re-elected to serve multiple terms.

SMU's Board of Trustees dedicate their expertise and resources to the advancement of SMU and play an integral role in the implementation of the mission and strategic plan of the University.

Joining the board in fall 2024 are Cynthia Fierro Harvey '99, Christopher Kleinert '88, Steven J. Lindley '74, Kyle D. Miller '01, James T. Mobley '80, Bryan S. Sheffield '01, Brian S. Tyler, William H. Vanderstraaten '82, John E. Waldron III and Abigail Williams '94. This is the first term of service for all except Cynthia Fierro Harvey, who previously served on the board from 2016 to 2020. Learn more about each [new board member here](#).

Additionally, two new *ex officio* members will join the board for the 2024-25 academic year – student representative Jude Lugo and faculty representative David Sedman.

Rotating off the board are Gerald B. Alley '75, who served from 2016 to 2024; Paul B. Loyd, Jr. '68, who served from 2000 to 2024; and Scott J. McLean '78, who served as an *ex officio* member while chairman of the Alumni Board from 1996 to 1997, then again as an elected trustee from 2012 to 2024. We thank these trustees for their service and dedication to SMU.

Matthew B. Myers to conclude his deanship of the Cox School of Business during the 2024 – 2025 academic year

As [announced earlier today](#), Matthew B. Myers, Tolleson Chair in Business Leadership, David B. Miller Endowed Professor and ninth dean of the Cox School of Business has informed us of his intention to step down from the deanship by the end of the 2024 – 2025 academic year. I know you join me in thanking Matt for his past and continuing leadership until a new dean comes on board.

I will begin meeting with Cox faculty, executive board members, staff and students to inform the position description that will guide our search for the next dean. Invitations will go out to the search committee next week, which, once confirmed, I will share with you in subsequent newsletters. In the interim, I am pleased to announce that Jason Nance, Judge James Noel Dean of the Dedman School of Law, will serve as committee chair and that [Korn Ferry](#) will serve as executive search partner for this search.

Please join me in thanking Matt for his service and congratulating him on his many, lasting accomplishments for Cox and SMU.

Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) to collect student assessment work for 2024-2025 academic year

The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) will be collecting student assessment work during the 2024-2025 academic year for the following Common Curriculum components: Creativity and Aesthetics (CA); Historical Contexts (HC); Literary Analysis and Interpretation (LAI); Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Inquiry (PREI); Community Engagement (CE); and Civics and Individual Ethics (CIE).

Faculty teaching courses with these components in May 2024 through Spring 2025 are required to submit student work that demonstrates attainment of the skills associated with each component. These faculty will receive an email survey from IPE just after the fall 2024 and spring 2025 census date. This survey will gather information about the type of assignments faculty use to assess student learning. Based on survey results, IPE will send detailed instructions to each faculty member about how to submit their students' assessment work. During the summer and intersessions, faculty will receive instructions for submitting assessment work via [Box](#).

1. For information about which courses fulfill these Common Curriculum requirements, faculty may consult the [Common Curriculum course search](#) tool.
2. For information about the learning outcomes, supporting skills, and assessment rubric for each Common Curriculum component, faculty may consult the [Common Curriculum Assessment Rubrics page](#).
3. For information about how to design an effective assessment assignment, faculty may consult the [IPE Common Curriculum Assessment resources page](#).

Thank you to all faculty for supporting the Common Curriculum and Common Curriculum assessment.

SMU Police Department conducts active threat training exercise

The SMU Police Department, in conjunction with emergency service partners from University Park and Highland Park, conducted an active threat training exercise on Wednesday, June 12, from 1–3 p.m. at Carr Collins Hall.

Safety exercises like these help our community prepare for potential campus threats by providing realistic scenarios as training opportunities. While the exercise's noise and activity might have been distracting, events such as these help to keep our campus safe and allow our Police Department and neighboring first responders to strengthen their skills. I appreciate everyone's support and commitment to promoting and enhancing campus safety.

Please direct any additional questions to SMU Police at 214-768-3388.

Academic Excellence

Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (A-LEC) awarded certification by internationally recognized College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)

The Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (A-LEC) is pleased to announce that it has earned certification as a Level I certified tutor training program by the internationally recognized [College Reading and Learning Association](#) (CRLA).

For over 30 years CRLA has been a leader in learning assistance, reading, and academic support programs with almost 1,300 members and over 2,000 certified training programs worldwide.

The A-LEC has worked hard to develop a tutor training program that meets CRLA's rigorous standards and has successfully completed the International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) peer review process. Please join me in congratulating the A-LEC on a job well done.

2024 Retiring Faculty Dinner

On Tuesday, May 14, my husband Todd and I hosted the annual Retiring Faculty Dinner, honoring professors who have or will retire from SMU during the 2023 - 2024 academic year. During the event, retiring faculty members' deans and I honored this year's retiring faculty members and celebrated their career accomplishments.

Please join me in congratulating these outstanding [faculty members on their retirement](#). Both collectively and as individuals, they have established a legacy that will not soon be forgotten.

One of the faculty members that we celebrated at this year's Retiring Faculty dinner, Professor Joseph J. Norton, S.J.D., passed away on Saturday, June 8, 2024. I was saddened to learn of his passing and would like to extend my condolences to Professor Norton's family, friends, colleagues and students.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Call for applications: O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute Graduate Fellowship Program

The O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute (ODSRCI) calls for applications for its Graduate Fellowship Program. This fellowship aims to support talented graduate students who demonstrate exceptional research potential in accelerated data science and advanced research computing. Special consideration will be given to research in the areas of quantum computing, digital twins, and advanced AI applications.

The ODSRCI's Graduate Fellowship Program awards fellows a \$26,000 stipend over 10 months to pursue innovative projects aligned with the Institute's mission. Program participants will also receive a dedicated workspace within the Institute, access to mentorship and professional development opportunities, as well as enhanced research support.

Interested graduate students should work with their faculty advisors to [submit a completed application](#) by June 21, 2024, at 5 p.m. Applicants should include a copy of their CV and a letter of recommendation as part of their application packet. Completed packets can be emailed to Neena Imam (nimam@smu.edu) and Robert Kalescky (rkalescky@smu.edu).

SMU and Thomson Reuters host first-of-its-kind Human Trafficking Data Conference

The U.S. Department of State estimates that 27.6 million people are trafficked worldwide for labor and sexual exploitation. Unfortunately, the current data landscape is unable to reveal the full picture of human trafficking and, at times, even perpetuates misinformation. The reasons for this are complex, but SMU is taking the lead to shed light on this important issue.

More than 100 participants, including law enforcement agents, nonprofit organization leaders, government officials, researchers, data scientists, and others, attended the inaugural [SMU Human Trafficking Data Conference](#) on June 3–4, sponsored by Thomson Reuters. During the event, attendees learned about opportunities and innovations to fight human trafficking through the use of high quality, high volume data. Organized by faculty member Beth Wheaton-Páramo, the economist leading the SMU Human Trafficking Data Research (HTDR) Project, the conference brought together a cross-section of leaders devoted to anti-trafficking measures and stimulated cross-discipline conversations around methods to obtain, enhance and utilize human trafficking data.

Wheaton-Páramo and SMU Research Technology Developer Mateo Langston Smith shared information about the federally funded data warehouse that the SMU Human Trafficking Data Research Project created through a \$1.187 million grant from the Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice.

SMU's data warehouse centralizes data on human trafficking across the United States and internationally. The goal is to give researchers, law enforcement and others devoted to anti-trafficking a single, secure place where they can store data, analyze trends in forced labor and sex trafficking, and collaborate with other anti-trafficking experts. The data warehouse is enhanced through research in areas such as AI and machine learning, statistical methods, and economics.

O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute (ODSRCI) announces recipients of Faculty Research Acceleration Grant

The ODSRCI is pleased to announce this year's recipients of the Faculty Research Acceleration Grant (FRAG). Faculty from any field of study were eligible to apply and the grant was designed to bolster research that specifically incorporates large-scale data science, multimodal data, AI/ML technologies, or implementation on SMU high-performance computing (HPC) platforms.

This year's ODSRCI FRAG recipients are as follows:

1. "SmartCADD: AI-QM Empowered Drug Discovery Platform with Explainability in a Secure, Web-Based SaaS Platform"
 1. Elfi Kraka, professor in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Chemistry.
 2. Corey Clark, deputy director of SMU Guildhall; assistant professor in Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Computer Science; director of the Human and Machine Intelligence (HuMI) Game Lab.
2. "Unveiling Seismotectonics of the Subduction Zones: Leveraging Machine Learning Analysis of Ocean Bottom Seismometers"
 1. Heather DeShon, professor and department chair of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences.
 2. Aziz Zanjani, postdoctoral researcher in the Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences.

New tool to detect protein-protein interactions could lead to promising avenues for gene therapy and other treatments

MinJun Kim, Robert C. Womack Chair in Engineering and professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Lyle School of Engineering, and his team unveiled a groundbreaking solid-state nanopore device for swiftly and accurately identifying protein interactions, particularly crucial in gene therapy advancements. This innovation enables real-time monitoring, saving time and resources with its ability to analyze small sample sizes. By illuminating protein bonding, such as FGF-1 and heparin, it not only enhances gene therapy efficacy but also holds promise for treating diseases rooted in aberrant protein interactions. This pioneering technology heralds a new era in biomedical research and treatment development. [Read more about the tool here.](#)

Inclusive Excellence

Office of Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) collaborated with National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) to host educational AI strategy workshop

SMU's Office of Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) recently collaborated with the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) to deliver an insightful workshop on AI Strategy. The session, taught by Doug Gray, the director of data science at Walmart, was held at Frances Anne Moody Hall and made possible through the diligent efforts of NSBE board member Robert Amponsah, director of strategic initiatives at Lyle School of Engineering and Terry Teague, senior director of admissions and corporate partnerships at GOCE. Thank you to everyone responsible for organizing and facilitating such an enriching educational experience for all participants.



News and Noteworthy

Office of Engaged Learning hosts open Summer Research Symposium “Lunch and Learns” featuring SMU faculty

The Office of Engaged Learning invites SMU community members, particularly undergraduate students who are engaged in research, to its annual Summer Research Symposium. This lunch-and-learn event, which features a different faculty presentation or panel each week, will take place throughout the summer at noon in the Fondren Science Building. Lunch will be provided. The series began this week featuring Beth Wheaton-Páramo, research assistant professor and senior lecturer in the Department of Economics at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences whose research in human trafficking was highlighted above.

To learn more about the upcoming sessions and register, [visit SMU 360](#).

Lyle School of Engineering team partnered with Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to host pre-recruitment event on SMU-in-Taos campus

A Lyle School of Engineering team and David Lee, assistant vice president for curricular operations and strategy, hosted a team of managers from Los Alamos National Labs on the SMU-in-Taos campus on May 29. The Lyle team consisted of Linda Parker, career development director of the Hart Center for Engineering Leadership, and Joe Camp, professor and department chair *ad interim* for the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering. The Lyle team and Dr. Lee gave the LANL group team a campus tour and discussed potential partnerships to connect students to experiences in Taos, including internships with Los Alamos. While on-site, LANL's Maintenance and Site Services group brought several drones for demonstration in Dr. Camp's class. This class was unique in that students ranged from those completing their first year to the Ph.D. level.



Office of Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) and Cox School of Business hosts successful marketing innovation summit

GOCE is pleased to announce the success of the [Shaping the Future of Marketing](#) event, held in collaboration with Brand Innovators. This event was attended by 150 Vice Presidents and Chief Marketing Officers from Fortune 500 companies, including PepsiCo, AT&T, American Cancer Society, 7-Eleven, Walmart, TGI Fridays, Verizon, Samsung, and others. The event brought together students and faculty from SMU Cox and Meadows School of the Arts, as well as staff from SMU's Division of External Affairs.

The summit's panel on the Impact of AI featured two GOCE instructors, Sharlene Jenner from [Abelson Taylor](#), and Abhi Vyas from [Verizon](#), alongside GOCE Future of Work Advisory members Doug Gray from [Walmart](#), and Venky Shankar, Harold M. Brierley Endowed Professor from the Department of Marketing at Cox School of Business. Ed Fox, the W.R. and Judy Howell Director of the JCPenney Center for Retail Excellence and the Marilyn R. and Leo F. Corrigan, Jr. Endowed Professor in Cox School of Business' Department of Marketing, delivered a keynote on Dark Patterns.



Sincerely,

Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

SMU